

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 3241

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CY UR

SUBJ: ILICHEV COMES TO CYPRUS

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT PRODUCED NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE, BUT KEPT ALIVE EARLIER SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR BROAD CYPRUS CONFERENCE AND RENEWED PUBLIC SOVIET COMMITMENT TO INDEPENDENT CYPRUS. BROAD-SPECTRUM PUBLIC INTEREST QUICKLY DISAPPEARED. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ILICHEV SPENT NOISY, BUT LARGELY BARREN, THREE DAYS IN CYPRUS SEPTEMBER 17-20. COMMUNIST PARTY AKEL AND ALLIES TURNED OUT STANDARD, RESPECTABLE CLAQUES TO HAIL HIS ARRIVAL LIMASSOL, INITIAL CALL ON CLERIDES, AND DEPARTURE AT LARNACA. (REPORTEDLY, OCCASIONS SPARKED SOME SCUFFLING BETWEEN EOKA-B AND LEFTISH ELEMENTS.) MASS ORGINIZATIONS TURNED OUT PREDICTABLE PETITIONS FOR SOVIET ROLE IN
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CYPRUS PROBLEM.

3. GREEK CYPRIOT MOOD SEIZED ON VISIT AS POSITIVE SIGN OF SUPERPOWER INTEREST IN CYPRUS. THIS SENTIMENT REFLECTED ACROSS THE BOARD IN LOCAL GREEK PRESS: EVEN FAR-RIGHT "ETHNIKI", WHICH EARLIER EMBRACED SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR BROAD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CYPRUS, KNOWINGLY RECORDED ZORDED ILICHEV ARRIVAL.

4. AFTER INITIAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 18, ILICHEV AND CLERIDES NOTED "IDENTITY OF VIEW" ON (1) INDEPENDENCE, SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF CYPRUS; (2) WITHDRAWAL OF "ALL FOREIGN FORCES" FROM ISLAND; (3) NEED TO FIND NEW WAYS TO GUARANTEE INDEPENDENCE OF CYPRUS. ILICHEV CITED "IDENTITY OF VIEW" AS "BEST GUARANTEE FOR FUTURE" OF CYPRUS (REF FBIS TA 181616). CLERIDES REPEATED ACCEPTANCE OF SOVIET CONFERENCE PROPOSAL. LATER HE OPINED THAT VISIT WOULD "CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALY TO CORRECT FACING OF CYPRUS PROBLEM".

5. ILICHEV HAD LENGTHENCHANGE WITH DENKTASH, WHO PROMPTLY TOLD PRESS HE STILL OPPOSED SOVIET PROPOSAL. HE ALSO MET WITH UNFICYP FORCE COMMANDER PREM CHAND, UNSYG SPECIAL REP WECKMANN. THROUGHOUT, GOCYPRUS GAVE STANDARD VIP TREATMENT.

6. FOREIGN MINISTRY'S ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL PANAYIDES TOLD AMBASSADOR SEPTEMBER 19 THAT ILICHEV'S PERFORMANCE HAD BEEN MUCH MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN EARLIER ONES BY YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTER MINIC OR ROMANIAN ENVOY. DIRGEN DESCRIBED ILICHEV AS "DIPLOMAT-POLITICIAN" WHO HAD MILKED PUBLIC ARRIVAL AT LIMASSOL FOR ALL IT WAS WORTH. PANAYIDES DECLINED COMMENT ON SUBSTANCE, SAYING ONLY THAT GOCYPRUS APPRECIATED FACT SOVIETS HAD SENT THEIR TOP TROUBLE SHOOTER (REFERENCE WAS TO ILICHEV'S USSURI TALKS WITH CHINESE).

7. COMMENT: ALL SIGNS SUGGEST THAT ILICHEV'S VISIT WAS SUBSTANTIVE ZERO. EMPTINESS OF GOCYPRUS COMMENTARY, PLUS FACT THAT PRESS FANFARE QUICKLY CEASED, REINFORCE THIS CONCLUSION. VISIT DID SERVE TO REEMPHASIZE WELL-KNOWN SOVIET POSITIONS, CONFERENCE PROPOSAL, AND SOVIET CLAIM TO VOICE IN HANDLING OF CYPRUS PROBLEM. END COMMENT.

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